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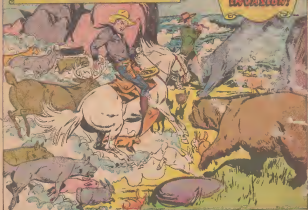


KEN MAYNARD

A legendary tale of old tells of the Pied Piper of Hamelin who lured rats away with a merry flute! But who is the Pied Piper of the West? What strange powers does he hold over the beasts of the field? **KEN MAYNARD**, wandering cowboy adventurer, digs into the uncanny mystery with blazing guns and flailing fists for a bang-up showdown!

and The
Pied Piper
of The West!

Chapter I -
**THE ANIMAL
INVASION**



AS DUSK SETTLES OVER THE GREAT WESTERN PLAINS, THE CANTER OF A HORSE IS HEARD THROUGH THE STILL AIR!



THE EDGE IS KEN MAYNARD, WHO CROSSES EVERY BEGINNING HORIZON IN SEARCH OF FURTHER ADVENTURE!

EASY, TAZZAN! THEY'RE ONLY JACK-RABBITS CROSSING OUR TRAIL!



BUT I NEVER SAW SO MANY RABBITS BEFORE IN ONE PLACE! SEEMS LIKE AN EVIDENCE OF THE CRITTERS! WELL, MOVE ON, TAZZAN!



A FARM! AND IT'S GETTING DARK! MAYBE WE CAN PASS THE NIGHT HERE!



BUT KEN MAYNARD COMES UPON A QUEEN SITUATION!

HEY, WHAT'S THIS? LOOKS LIKE TROUBLE AFOOT!



WHAT'S THE TROUBLE, FARMER? YOU FOLKS LOOK AS IF YOU'RE EXPECTING AN ATTACK BY OUTLAWS!

IT'S HORSEWAD MEN TO US, STRANGER!



I'M A FARMER AND I'VE GOT ACRES AND ACRES IN GOOD CROPS! BADMEN COULDN'T DO US MUCH HARM EVEN IF THEY TRIED! THERE'S ONLY ONE WARMINT WE'RE MIGHTY AFRAID OF...



...RABBITS! THEN DOES SOME CRITTERS CAN CHEW UP A FARM IN NO TIME! SCAT! SHOO! BLAST YORE CANNERY WIDE!





KEN MAYNARD CANNOT USE AN OLD BIT OF ANIMAL LOGIC!

NOW INTO THE THICKEST OF THE RABBIT
PACK! ALL ANIMALS FEAR FIRE!

YAAAA! SHOO!
SCAT! YIP-YIP!
YAAAAAA!



BONG!

HEY! THAT
SHOT NEARLY
CLIPPED ME!
I GUESS I CAN'T
BLAME THOSE
OVER-ANNOYED FARM
FOLKS BLASTING AWAY AT
THE RABBITS FOR ALL
THEY'RE WORTH!

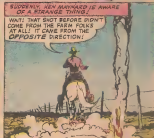


THIS DIDN'T STOP ALL THE RABBITS, BUT IT BROKE
THE MAIN HERD AND SCARED PLENTY AWAY! AND
LUCKILY, NO MORE SHOTS CAME
BY WHY ACCIDENTALLY!



SUDDENLY, KEN MAYNARD IS AWARE
OF A STRANGE THING!

WAIT! THAT SHOT BEFORE DIDN'T
COME FROM THE FARM FOLKS
AT ALL! IT CAME FROM THE
OPPOSITE DIRECTION!



THAT MEANS SOMEONE
TRIED TO BUSHWHACK
ME WHILE I MADE A
PERFECT TARGET IN THE
MIGHT WITH THE PLAIN
BLANKET! BUT WHO?
AND WHY? I DON'T
SAVVY!



NO USE TRYING TO FIND OUT IN
THE DARK! I'LL WAIT TILL
MORNING! RIGHT NOW, LET'S
SEE HOW THE FARMERS ARE
DOING AGAINST THE
RABBITS!



WE GOT THE IDEA FROM YOU!
MAYBE THESE FIREBRANDS
CAN CLEAR OUT THE REST
OF THE RABBITS.
IF WE WORK
ALL NIGHT!

GOOD!
I'LL HELP!







IT'S A BARGAIN THEN! TONIGHT YOU'LL HEAR MY FLUTE UNDER THE MOON! I GUARANTEE NO RABBIT PACK WILL TOUCH A SINGLE FARM! SO LONG.

WHAT DO YOU MAKE OF IT, SHERIFF?

I HUNNO! SOUNDS PLUMB LOCO TO ME!

TO ME, TOO! I'M GOING TO CHECK UP ON THAT GONK-LOOKING RICHARDOO TONIGHT TO SEE IF HE DOES HIS STUFF!

THAT RIGHT, IN THE VALLEY, THE FLUTE OF RICHARDOO EBBY PINGS UNDER THE MOON!

TOOTLE!
TOOT!
TOOT!

HES AT HOME WITH HIS FLUTE ALL RIGHT! CAN HE REALLY LURE RABBITS AWAY?

I'VE GOT TO SEE THIS WITH MY OWN EYES! THE MAGIC IS COMING FROM THIS WAY— I THINK! IT'S HARD TO FOLLOW A SOUND LIKE THAT.

A CLIFF AT THE EDGE OF THE VALLEY! I WAS ONLY FOLLOWING AN ECHO! I RECKON TRACKING HIM DOWN WON'T BE EASY!

AT DAWN...

I NEVER GOT NEAR HIM! I'LL WAIT AROUND TOWN TO HEAR THE RESULTS!

WHEN THE FARMERS MEET LATER...

NOT ONE OF US WAS RAIDED BY RABBITS LAST NIGHT!

MEET A NEW PACK STRUCK, BUT I LURED THEM AWAY TO A RIVER WHERE THEY DROWNED!

HES RIGHT! I JUST CAME FROM THE RIVER LEAD! RABBITS FLOATING ALL OVER THERE—DROWNED LIKE RATS!

WELL, GENTLS? I GUESS THAT'S PROOF!

BUT MORE RABBIT PACKS
MAY COME! I'LL KEEP ON THE
JOB TILL THE PLAGUE IS OVER
FOR SURE! THEN WILL YUH
PAY ME?

SURE,
A BAG
OF GOLD!



IN THE FOLLOWING WEEKS, ABOUT
AFTER NIGHT, THE NOISED TONES
OF THE FLUTE BOOD
THROUGH THE HIGHLANDS!

FANTASTIC AS IT SEEMS,
HE'S DONE THE JOB! NO
RABBIT PACKS DID ANY
CROP DAMAGES FOR A WEEK!
BUT I STILL WANT TO SEE
HIM LURE THEM AWAY
WITH MY OWN
EYES!



I THINK I'M ON HIS TRAIL
FOR SURE THIS TIME!



WHAT? NO RABBITS ARE FOLLOWING
HIM AT ALL! NOT ONE! THIS ALL
ADD UP TO SOMETHING MIGHTY
SUSPICIOUS! I'M GOING TO HAVE
A PALAVER WITH THIS
PETE PIPER!



HAIT, PARTNER!
YOU'VE GOT SOME
EXPLAINING
TO DO!

KEN MAYNARD!
MY GENUINE TALK
FOR ME!



PETE PIPER MAKES THE MISTAKE OF DRAWING
AGAINST THE DISEASED LIGHTNING SPEED AND
USURPING ANY OF THE WEST'S GREAT HERO!

VIPES!

AS I WAS
SAYING - WAS
YOUR TONGUE!

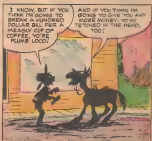
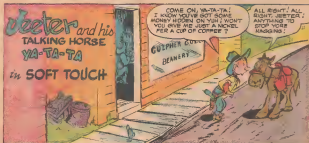


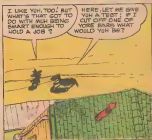
YOU'RE NOT LURING
RABBITS AWAY! WHAT'S
YOUR GAME? TALK
OR ... ULPS!



SURELY A RIDE SHAKES OUT OF NOWHERE!











KEN MAYNARD

and The
Pied Piper
of The West!

After being flung in the river hours
before, is *THIS* the corpse of
KEN MAYNARD, grieved over by
his faithful horse, Tarzan?



BUT IN THE WARM SUN, THE
CORPSE STIRS AND
COMES TO LIFE!

!GASP!
I---UN---
I'M SAFE!



BUT AWOY
SOUND LIKE THIS.
I HAD NO CHANCE
TO SWIM! MY LAST
THOUGHTS WERE
THAT I WAS
DROWNING!
WAIT---NOW
I GET IT!



TARZAN SAVED ME! HE
SWAM IN THE RIVER AFTER ME,
GOT HOLD WITH HIS TEETH, AND
DROGGED ME UP ON THE ROCKS
HERE SAFELY! THEN HE
WAITED PATIENTLY ALL
NIGHT TIL I CAME
TO! GOOD OLD
TARZAN!





WAIT! WAGON TRACKS AGAIN!
NOW I SEE! PETE PIPER AND HIS
MEN SIMPLY TRAPPED RABBITS,
BROUGHT THEM HERE IN A WAGON,
AND DUMPED THEM IN THE
RIVER! THAT WAS HOW HE
FOOLED THE FARMERS INTO
BELIEVING HE WAS A
PIED PIPER!



AND HE GOT A BIG BAG OF
GOLD FOR THE JOB,
THE CROOK!



BUT THEN, A STILL MORE
BAPPLING THOUGHT CLICKS
INTO KEN MAYNARD'S MIND!

WAIT! IF HIS MEN DID TRAP AND
DOWN ALL THE RABBITS, THEN
THEY REALLY DID THE JOB!
BUT WHY DID THEY HAVE TO
DISGUISE IT ALL AS A PIED
PIPER ACT? JUMPING
KITTIES!
NOW I AM
ALL MIXED
UP!



ONLY ONE MAN CAN ANSWER ALL
THE QUESTIONS...PETE PIPER
HIMSELF! I'LL FIND HIM IF
I HAVE TO RIDE MY BEGGAR
THROUGH THE
WHOLE WEST!



THERE IS A LONG, WEARY
SEARCH, HALF A YEAR, FOR
THE COWBOY ADVENTURER!

TOWN AFTER TOWN AND NO
SIGN OF PETE PIPER! I'LL
KEEP GOING! LET'S
AMBLE ON, TARZAN!



ONE DAY, AT DUSK...

THIS IS SHEEP
COUNTRY! PEACEFUL
SCENE, EH,
TARZAN!



BUT THE PEACE IS
RUDELY SHOWN!

COYOTES!
A BIG HILLEN
PACK!

YIP!
YIP!
YIP!
YIP!
YIP!



THEY'LL SLAUGHTER THE SHEEP!
UNLESS WE REAP THEM OFF!
BITE WIND,
TARZAN!



PLENTY OF NOISE ALWAYS
RIGHTENS THESE COWARDLY
SPEAKING BRUTES!

**BANG!
BANG!
BANG!**

YAAAAA!
YAAAAA!

WHINNYVW!



BUT SUDDENLY, A SHOT
RINGS OUT, AND...

BANG!

OHWWW!



UH... ONLY BEATED ME!
BUT THE COYOTES...
THEY'RE TURNING
ON ME!



THE ENRAGED HILLERS, KEEN TO SENG
HELPLESS PREY, LEAP FOR KEN MAYNARD
IN A SHARLING PACK!



UNARMED THE WESTERN
HERO BATTLES FOR HIS
LIFE WITH HIS
BARE HANDS!

THERE'S NO TIME
TO RECOVER MY
GUN! TAKE THAT,
YOU MANDY WASHINTS!
BUT I CAN'T HOLD
THEM OFF FOREVER!



TARTAN IS MY ONLY HOPE! BUT
ALL HORSES ARE AFRAID OF COYOTES!
WILL HE ANSWER MY WHISTLE?

WHEEECEET!
WHEE WHEEET!

WHINNYVW!



BUT TARTAN IS ONE HORSE IN A THOUSAND!
NATURAL FEAR OF SAVAGE BEASTS IS OVERCOME
BY UTTER DEVOTION TO HIS BELOVED MASTER!

GOOD OLD TARTAN!
I MAY NEED
THIS GUN
AGAIN!





JUMPING JUNIPER! WHAT DOES THIS REMIND ME OF? WHEN I CHASED THE RABBIT PACK, I WAS BUSHWHACKED! NOW WHEN I CHASE A COYOTE PACK, I'M BUSHWHACKED AGAIN! IS PETE PIPER OPERATING IN THESE PARTS?



AND THE STRANGE REPUTATION CONTINUES AS KEN MAYNARD CHECKS WITH THE LOCAL SHEEPHERDER!

YEH, STRANGER! A BIG FLAME OF COYOTES HAS STRUCK US SHEEPHERDERS! WE'RE FACIN' RUIN IF THOSE YAKINITS KEEP KILLIN' OUR SHEEP!

???



HE'S GOT ME! I COULD CHARGE HIM WITH ATTEMPTED MURDER AGAINST ME, BUT THAT WOULDN'T SOLVE THIS WHOLE CASE! ONLY ONE THING LEFT NOW... GIVE HIM ENOUGH ROPE TO HANG HIMSELF!



I DUNNO WHAT YOU TWO ARE TALKIN' ABOUT, BUT IF YUH GET RID OF THE COYOTE PACK, YUH GET A BIG REWARD FROM THE SHEPHERDS!



I'LL FINISH THE JOB TONIGHT WITH MY FLUTE! I'LL COLLECT TOMORROW!

THAT NIGHT, THE TREMULOUS NOTES OF A FLUTE ECHO FAR AND WIDE THROUGH THE SHEEP COUNTRY!



BUT KEN MAYNARD LISTENS FOR ANOTHER TELL-TALE SOUND!



WE DON'T CARE ABOUT THE FLUTE WHICH IS JUST FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE SHEPHERDERS' EARS! THAT OTHER SOUND --- A WAGGON! WAGGONS FIT INTO THIS SOMEHOW!



HUH! THEY'RE PICKING UP DEAD COYOTES! BUT HOW...?

THESE COYOTES DIED OF POISON! ANOTHER PIECE TO FIT INTO THE PUZZLE! AND IT ALL BEGINS TO MAKE SENSE!



BUT PETE PIPER'S HENCHMEN SPY KEN MAYNARD, AND ...

FLUG THAT SMOKING JASPER!



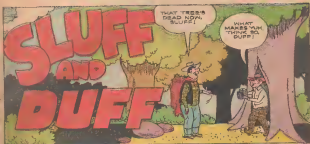
I NEED TAZKAW TO CHASE THOSE SIDEWINDERS!





STAMPEDING SHEEP MEAN TROUBLE! NO DOUBT TO THE VICTIM IN THESE HERDER'S PATH! FOR ONCE WITHIN THE ARMS OF HIS GREAT HORSE, KEN MAYNARD RUNS A LOSING RACE! WILL PETER EVER GET AWAY WITH HIS STRANGE AND AMAZING SWINDLES?

Read Chapter III OF THIS AMAZING ADVENTURE!





KEN MAYNARD

REVENGE IN RED CANYON

By Al Parker

JED MASON watched the riderless horse turn into the corral and a sudden anger flled his huge body. Murder, then, was the master's answer to his offer of a parley! True, Mason had resented the advent of the neater on the grazing land, and had wanted to rid the territory of a type he despised. Yet he recognized the legality of his claim, and had sought a peaceful solution. Why else had he sent his foreman, Leo Larabee, with a message for the master, Golden, to come over and discuss settling out? The empty saddle bore mute testimony as to how the request had been answered.

Mason blamed himself now for the ambush of Larabee. He should have handled the chore himself. He would have spo had he thought that it might lead to murder. Leo had been deliberately chosen to make the offer, for he had a way with words. He, if anyone, should have been able to entice Golden, who had refused all offers of friendship, into seeing Mason.

It was obvious that Leo had failed. Now he lay somewhere on the prairie, victim of a bush-whacking bullet, and the night wind sang his dirge. Well, lead could be met with lead, and Golden would be brought to justice for the wanton slaying.

"Don't worry, Star," he said, patting the quivering flanks of the obviously agitated cayuse. "the boys and I will bring Golden in to the sheriff!"

And they wouldn't wait for the lawman to organize a posse. Town was many miles away and too much valuable time could be lost sending a message. No, he and the hands would ride tonight and round up Golden for the law. No sense sitting and waiting. Why, even now he was wasting time—time that should be spent in making certain that the killer of Larabee was apprehended.

Swift strides carried him to the bunkhouse, and he crashed open the door. The waddies regarded the stern face of their normally genial boss in surprise.

"Leo back?" one asked.

"No, and I reckon he isn't ever coming back," snapped Mason. "Star just came in—riderless!"

Words were generally not much of a necessity in this big sprawling country, and in time of trouble they were completely unnecessary. Silently, the men strapped on shooting irons and filed out the door. No sound betrayed their feelings, no expression demonstrated what they felt, but a mutual mission of vengeance had been born in the quiet of the bunkhouse. These men had worked and laughed with Leo Larabee. Mason knew that Golden would be brought to town before any one of them knew sleep again.

They mounted grumly, then set out swiftly after Jed Mason as he led the way to Golden's land. As the snorting hoofs consumed the miles that lay between the ranches, Jed gave way to meditation. How could Golden have been so foolish as to kill? How could he expect to escape? What did he expect the murder to avail him? His spread was ruined now. All that was left for him now was fight—a fight that was docketed to failure, for not a man on the Bar-17 would rest until he was behind bars.

Mason was the first to spot the rider. Even at that distance, he recognized the thin figure of Golden. Only one man in the Territory sat a horse so awkwardly, and only one man had need of such frantic speed in the dead of night. How clever he was, too, heading directly toward the Bar-17 rather than pursuing the course toward the border one would expect him to take. Jed blessed the luck that had caused him to sight the neater. Fate had made it certain that the killer of Leo Larabee would not go unpunished.

Golden obviously had not seen them yet. Why else would he have continued riding so furiously toward the aims that waited to bring him to justice? Jed Mason reached for his holster and fired a warning shot into the air.

"Rein up, Golden," he barked. "And drop your shooting iron. We're taking you in for Leo's killing!"

The thin man reined to a halt and opened

his mouth as though to speak. Cautiously, he surveyed the cold eyes that regarded him and found no mercy in them. His next move was dictated by panic, as he flipped his mount's flank, wheeling it in the opposite direction. Moments later, he was dusting away frantically from Jed Mason and the avenging Bar-17 hands.

The meeting had been so unexpected that even Jed Mason had found it difficult to believe Golden's capture would be so simple. Now this latest twist and flight had left him gaping with the rest. Still, he was the first to regain his composure, and he snapped another warning bullet after the fleeing nester. Let him run if he liked! There'd be no eluding this pursuit. Jed Mason and his boys would bring him in for Leo's killing. They knew in their hearts they would—and in Golden's he must know it, too!

Their stunned pause, however, had given the little nester time to open up the gap necessary to safety, and before they slapped leather he was but a tiny figure rapidly disappearing into the hills. Ride, Golden, ride for the hills! They won't save you, for in your inexperience you had blundered fatally!

Jed held up his hand in a gesture for the boys to halt. As they gathered round him, he jerked a thumb in the direction Golden had taken, and his action was answered by grim smiles of satisfaction.

"The Jasper's trapped himself. He'll find it out soon enough when he rides smack into Red Canyon. There's no getting away for him now!"

The others grunted and put spurs to their mounts. The same thought ran through each one of their minds. It was funny how this show-down had been being played. Red Canyon had been the favorite stamping grounds of Leo Larabee, and he was the only man who had known a way out. No, not even Jed Mason knew Leo's secret. Leo alone knew a hidden trail out of Red Canyon, and as a result, had always used it as a shortcut. No bribes or cajoling had ever induced him to reveal it, either. It seemed now as though they could hear his voice drawing a taunting refusal.

"No, Sir, there's times when a man just naturally wants privacy. The secret of Red Canyon stays with me!"

Now poor foolish Golden in his anxiety had

chosen the one trial that assured his capture. They followed him resolutely, for some of the urgency had been removed from the pursuit. To a man they realized that the nester was beyond escape now. No ducking or dodging could get him in the clear now. Each stride of the horse he rode only carried him closer to the moment when he must see the huge canyon. Soon he must find himself trapped—and then he must face the determined wranglers who were sworn to bring him in for their partner's murder.

Golden was still in sight. Indeed, the pursuit was narrowing, for it was evident that Golden's horse had been heavily ridden this day. Not that even the swiftest stallion could rescue him now, for he was only yards from the moment when he must face his chain of terror and to know that the men of the Bar-17 had him!

He was at it now! Chuckles swept through the ranks of Mason's riders as they watched Golden ride to the canyon's edge. They rode up leisurely, watching the little nester dismount. All the fight was gone from him, for, as a token of surrender, he drew his gun and tossed it to the ground. However, he was closely observed through stared eyes as he advanced toward them with hands raised. The man who could kill a harmless cowboy like Leo Larabee was capable of any mischief.

"No tricks, Golden," Mason cautioned him. "We're taking you in for Leo's murder."

"**N**OBODY killed me, Sir. Star nearly did," said a voice from the brush and astonished eyes beheld Leo Larabee sprawled on the ground, his left leg crumpled under him. "I was taking my short-cut through Red Canyon when that fool horse bolted at a rattler. I was thrown and guess my leg's broken. Golden, here, found me, and went to get you boys!"

The little nester grinned a confirmation. "Then when you accused me of killing Leo, I figured there was just one way to get you here in a hurry, and that was to play along with your suspicions. Just sort of a general misunderstanding, I reckon."

Jed Mason shook his head. "Seems there's been more than one misunderstanding, Golden," he said, reaching for the nester's hand. "Let's get Leo back to the ranch—Neighbors!"

THE END

BOXCAR BENNY

"Feet Folly"



IT BETTER STOP AND REST MY PATENT-LEATHER SHOES!

WUD' AINT YORE PATENT LEATHER SHOES?



SURE I HAVE, STEVE! THOSE ARE PATENT LEATHER SHOES.

(GASP!) YOU'RE READY FOR THE BOOBY HATCH, BOXCAR! THOSE ARE NOTHING BUT OLD WORN OUT SHOES!



I KNOW! THAT'S WHY I CALL THEM PATENT LEATHER SHOES---



--THE LEATHER IS ALL GONE AND MY FEET ARE **PATTIN'** THE GROUND!



KEN MAYNARD

and The
Pied Piper
of The West!

Chapter 11:

The **MOUNTAIN
LION MENACE!**

NOT A ROCK IN
SIGHT TO HIDE BEHIND!
NOT A TREE TO CLIMB!
RECKON I'M
SUNK!



WAIT! I'VE STILL
GOT A CHANCE
TO SAVE
MYSELF!



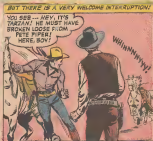
WHAT POSSIBLE HOPE
IS THERE
FOR ME?

INSTEAD OF
RUNNING
HOPELESSLY...



... WHY NOT
JOIN THE HERD
FOR A RIDE?





HE'S GOING TO TRY HIS
SAME STUNT UP IN THE CATTLE
COUNTRY WHERE NOBODY
HEARD OF HIM BEFORE!
BUT NOW I KNOW EXACTLY
HOW HE WORKS IT ALL! IT'S
THE SLICEST CROOKED
SCHEME I'VE EVER MET!



DAYS LATER, AFTER A HARD RIDE...

LONG HORN JUNCTION,
CENTER OF THE
CATTLE COUNTRY!



HOWDY, SHERIFF! I'M KEN
MAYNARD! DID AN HOMEBODY
WEARING CRAZY COLORS
NAMED PETE PIPER
SHOW UP YET?



WELL, YOU CAN EXPECT HIM
SOON! HAS THERE BEEN
ANY FLAQUE OF
MOUNTAIN
LIONS AROUND
HERE?

MOUNTAIN
CATS? NOT
MORE THAN
USUAL!



BUT AT THAT MOMENT...

SHERIFF! MOUNTAIN LIONS
JUST BROKE LOOSE OVER IN
THE CATTLE RANGES!
A WHOLE FLOCK OF 'EM! WORST
ATTACK OF THE
VERMIN'S EVER
HEARD OF!

JUST AS
I THOUGHT!



WAIT, YOU! HOW COME YOU
KNEW ABOUT THOSE
MOUNTAIN LIONS?
WHAT IN TARNATION
IS THIS ALL
ABOUT?

TELL YOU
LATER,
SHERIFF!



BITE WIND,
TARZAN!



THAT RANNY IS UP TO SOMETHING!
HE'S A SUSPICIOUS CHARACTER!
ROUND UP THE POSSE! WE'RE
GONNA NAB HIM AND CHECK
ON THOSE LIONS!

SHERIFF



